A Brief and Seasonable Word, directed for the Church of God, *Or*, The Christians Remembrancer touching the Gospel-Ministers Maintenance.

Beloved in Christ,

HAving had some serious and grave contemplation upon the publick work of the Lord in this season, and present dispensation, what might be the cause why the general affairs of the gospel drive so heavily; and the publick Instruments thereof act so indisposedly, that some that the Lord hath fitted for publick employments refuse to accept and act in any such places; others that are already in offices, neglect the discharge of their dutyes; and some lye under strong temptations to desire to be released from their Ministerial obligations; so that the most worthy work to be promoted is become the least regarded, and now lyes so undone, that 'tis almost become the Christians shame, that so few minde as they ought their Christian obligation, but neglect the most needful work of their generation; and amongst other things which proves a great obstruction in these spiritual and divine concerns, we finde Christs Ministring servants are fallen under very great straits; either to fall into danger for the neglect of the Ministry, in discharge of their offices or else to be charged to be worse then Infidels, in not providing for their familyes; and it is to be presupposed and may be justly feared, that such straits and necessityes are only occasioned, and may be truly charged upon the peoples omission of their dutyes, and being found under the neglect of their spiritual engagments; for whosoever detains Christs Ministers *right of Maintenance* run themselves upon a double rock of offence; they may be said to rob the Lord of his right and dues: which he hath reserved and appointed for his faithful labourers; and 'tis to be feared that the just complaints of Christs painful servants may

now cry in the ears of the Lord of hosts; and the Lord of hosts was very severe with the Jews his own people, for running every man to his own house and neglecting to build his Temple; which records may be as a Map to us, to admonish to duties, and to warn us from dangers; besides, such omissions as aforesaid, doth necessitate Christs Ministers either to the neglect of their trust in their respective offices; or else to rob their own particular relations and familyes; and to expend that part of their treasure or possession, that properly of right belongs to their wives and Children; which is doubtlesse contrary to all true principles of Nature, reason, justice, and religion; and in particular that good law, that requires every man, to do so to another, as he would have another do to him; moreover such neglects are high affronts and indignityes put upon the supreme Lord of such Ministring servants; that his faithful Ministers should be put to such straits and necessityes, so contrary to his minde contained and expresst in the holy scriptures, and for which causes his glorious name and precious truth comes to suffer great reproches.

Now in order to the removing these great difficultyes and curing such real greivances, we are forced thus to speak and to plead for the gospel Ministers *right of Mantenance*, being constrained even upon terms of necessity, in order to prevent a worse and more dangerous consequence. These things being premised and duly pondered, we have been moved and perswaded in our selves, once again to propose unto our well beloved brethren of the Church of Christ to lay these things to heart, and seriously and gravely to ponder this needful and weighty matter, that the gospel may no longer stand at our door: and in the pursuance of the discharge of a good conscience, especially in so honorable a cause, and for so publick and general a good of souls; that the precious gospel may be propagated, that poor sinners may be converted, that belevers in Christ may be established, that the gospel Ministers *right of Mantenance* may be preserved; that our Christian obligations may be discharged, that Christs faithful Ministers burdens may be removed; and themselves duely and constantly encouraged; and yet that the Churches might not be over-burdened, nor no particular person justly greived, we have thought it most proper to offer this needful matter, as a freewill offering; which is most consonant to our gospel-profession; God loved us freely, Christ dyed for us freely, this glad tidings

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and good news is to be preached freely ; and such as are taught ought to communicate to them that teacheth freely, and this to be as a supply to the Ministry ; to prevent them from decayes, and preserve them from necessitys: not refusing or despising the smallest mite from such as give it with a free heart ; nor limiting any whose willing heart the Lord shall enlarge in this needful work ; which work will doubtlesse be an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, a seasonable and commendable act for the present occasion, and a teaching president for the time to come.

Some Arguments further confirming this Christian obligation, in order to the provoking, to this needfull work of our generation.

1. *Arg.* IT is the divine authority, the Lord hath commanded it, charged it upon his people as a due debt, and hath left his Church in trust to disburse it, and the Lord hath given them security to requite it and reward them for it, his eminent servants have observed it, and pleaded their right to it, and have also received it, and as the wise man saith, we ought *to honour God with our substance, and the first fruits of all our encrease*, and also saith S. *Paul, let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all his goods*, or in all good things, and the husbandman that laboureth must first be partaker of the fruits ; and our duely paying our first fruits to the Lord is doubtless the best security by which we enjoy our substance, *Prov.* 3. 9. *Gal.* 6. 6. 2. *Tim.* 2. 6.

2. *Arg.* May be taken from principles of nature and reason, as the Apostle observes, *who goes to warfare at their own charge ? who plants a vineyard and eats not of the fruit thereof ? who feeds a flock and eats not of the Milk of the flock ? who plows and sowes but hops to be partakers of the fruits ?* or who goes out as ambassadour upon publique concerns exposing themselves to manifold and eminent dangers, and continueth to act and wait upon general occasions, and yet act upon their own expences ? It neither consists with Religion, Custome of nation, or with principles of common reason ; that a man in such a case should bear his own burden, or expend of his own particular treasures, upon the publique cause, and general affairs of the Churches.

3. *Arg.* May be taken from the present necessity, both in respect of the work, and in respect of the workmen, the work is very great,

and calls aloud for present help, there is converting work planting and building work, there uniting and reconciling work, purging and reforming work, repairing of breaches, and also rebuilding old wast places, and a great want of fitt instruments for all these great works; 2ly. in respect of the workmen, some have preached the Gospel freely, and have much diminished their substance, and some have spent their all, and have brought themselves into deep poverties; and wo be to all the concerned, if the Gospel be not preached; and some cannot wait upon the work of the ministry because of the pressing cares of family necessity; and if the Apostles thought it not meet to leave the word and prayer to serve tables; which is an office in the Churches, much more is it unreasonable to leave the Gospel-work to follow worldly employments.

4. *Arg.* Is because Christs Ministers ought not to be entangled with secular affairs but should be disengaged from the incumbrances of this present world, that they may give themselves up to wait diligently and frequently upon the sacred things of God, and to set convenient time apart for divine meditation, in order to divide the word aright for the peoples edification, even to consult the dispensation, the peoples condition and the present occasion, applying themselves to the time and season, and like wise and faithful stewards, to provide naturall and seasonable nutriment for the peoples souls, and to give the Lords houshold their meat in due season, and that they may be the better prepared and furnished with fitt matter for the better education of the Lords Children, and orderly disciplining of the Lords houshould, with sutable qualifications for a better world, and to approve themselves workmen, that their profiting may appear to all men, one of Gods eminent servants laboring with his hands, reckons it among the rest of his afflictions; and the same Apostle saith, that *he that preacheth the Gospel should also live of the Gospel.*

5. *Arg.* Because of the bad effects and sad consequences that will follow, as the natural fruits upon the neglect of the aforesaid duties, this will be to lay heavy burdens upon others shoulders, and not to touch them with one of our fingers, besides 'tis more then doubtfull to obtain a succession of Ministers, because 'tis foreseen, the Churches makes no provisions, some are tempted to refuse to accept of any offices; others in office do the work of God under great discouragements, and some others tempted to decline their Ministe-

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nal functions, and 'tis to be justly feared it is for want of due encouragements, and many eminent and usefull instruments the Lord hath lately taken from us in the prime of their days, which are very great losses in respect of their usefullness to the Churches; I pray God it be not in displeasure and as a scourge to us, and a just recompence upon us for not prizing as we ought the precious means of grace; it may be the Lord may make us prize his Ministers in the losse of them, because we have not valued them as we ought in the enjoyment of them, the priviledge we enjoyed in them and the benefit we reaped by them.

6. *Arg.* Because the Apostle gives rules for distributing and communicating, and what need is there for rules for giving, if there were not a duty obliging one rule more inwardly, and another more visibly; yet doubtless S. *Paul* would have both these rules to comply and agree together, and not to gainsay and oppose each other; the more inward rule is grounded upon that word of S. *Paul*, *according as every man purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudingly, or of compulsion, for the Lord loves a cheerful giver*; so that in man, (this little world,) the Lord hath a more private and inward court to write down in the table of the heart what every man should communicate with his hand; the more visible rule is, where the Apostle exhorts, *that one be not eased and another burdened*, but that things should be done by equality equity, and proportionably, consonant to every mans ability. When many shoulders are set to bear a heavy weight, it causes each mans burden to become very light; as every man hath received and under God hath prospered, he ought to lay aside and communicate as Gods faithfull steward; for it were a shame not to provide for their corporal necessities, which feed our souls with heavenly provisions.

7. *Arg.* Because the Lords harvest is now very great, and his faithfull and painfull labourers are very few, there is therefore the more reason we should enable and encourage those few labourers in honour to the Lords precept; We have sometimes been obedient in

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fruits of our poor requests; now it will be no lesse then Hypocrysie in us to pray for instruments with our mouths, and yet as it were withhold them with our hands; to beg and entreat the Lord for more fit and faithfull harvest labourers, and yet to detain that from them, by which they should be enabled instrumentally to discharge their offices; this will not be accepted in the day of our accompts: *let us not be deceived, God is not mocked; what a man sowes that he shall reap*: 'tis neither true charity, nor Christian policy, nor good husbandry to detain and think to save out of the Lords revenue.

Certain Particulars tendred as Motives for the further pressing and inforcing the aforesaid duties.

Motive 1. THe neglect of communicating is the great instrumental obstruction to gospel preaching. 1. Christians have not been taught and do not yet believe, neither are made sensible, that they are converted and engaged in the publick concerns of the Gospel. 2. Being not sensible, neglect to pray heartily and fervently for more gospel-preachers, vine-dressers, and harvest-labourers, pleading the arguments of a great harvest and few instruments. 3. The Church is negligent in looking out and appointing such persons, as the Lord hath gifted and qualified for publick offices. 4. Because when the Church do select fit persons for such offices, many such persons have not hearts to accept of such employments. Lastly, when some do accept of such offices, yet they are still detained and obstructed for want of necessary mantenance.

2. *Motive*. May be taken from our present liberty, to be in the discharge of this necessary duty, under these speciall providences, unexpected and undeserved deliverances, the which obligations, and from which large experiences, the Lord doubtlesse expects we would do some singular things more then others, and to be provident husbands of our precious time, even to take all advantages, and to improve with advantage all opportunities, and as S. *Paul* saith, *as we have opportunity to do good unto all men*; The Lord hath removed many obstructions, and hath opened a great door of hope, although there are many adversaries and hath raised up some instruments; the Lord hath graciously and miraculously wrought for us thus far, and now let us beware, that the preaching the gospel stand not at our doors: therefore seeing the Lord hath preserved our

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persons and substance in a great measure, and after an eminent manner, from the hands of our enemies, it may now be a seasonable and acceptable sacrifice from us as a token of our thankfulnesse, to honor God with our substance; and to expend part of it in his cause and service.

Motive 3. Another motive may be taken from our mortallity, to be diligent in this needful duty, and that whilst it is called to day lest death unexpected cease upon us, and cut us off from all further opportunities; let's remember what the wise man saith, *whatsoever thy hand findes thee to do, do it with all thy might*; *for there is no good work to be done in the grave whither we are going*; for our time is short at most, and uncertain at best, and we that are so uncertain of our times and seasons, ought to make use of all present opportunities, especially when we remember we must give an exact accompt to the God of Heaven, what good work we have promoted for God in our generation: let us therefore gravely consider what is to be done, and to be diligent in the discharge of our Christian obligation, that we may lay up in store a good foundation, against the time to come.

To conclude all, let us *be wise to do good, rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*, laying out and laying up in order to a better estate; also beware and take good heed of detaining the Lords dues, and what of right he hath reserved for his ministring servants, lest the Lord in his displeasure as a just recompence, should blast our fruits, and curse our blessings, and send or suffer devourers to devour our treasures: Moreover, take special notice also of Gods gracious promises, to such as honor him with their substance and bring treasure into his storehouses, he will fill their barns with plenty, and pour them out blessings abundantly, he will also rebuke the devourers for their sakes, and they shall be called the blessed of all nations.

Postscript.

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1. God in his Word expresly requires, *Gal.* 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*
2. Reade and well consider, 1 *Cor.* 9. *from ver.* 6. *to ver.* 15.
3. For these great ends the Apostle *Paul* soberly advises *Timothy, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, and to meditate upon these things, giving himself wholly to them; studying herein to shew himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.* 1. *Tim.* 4. 13. 15. 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. Now how can these things possibly be done, if the greatest part of the preachers time must be spent in seeking bread for himself and family; nay 'tis well some times, if their whole time be not little enough for that purpose: And 'tis very observable, that *Paul* himself reckons labouring with his hands among the rest of those hardships and afflictions that he met in the world: And the same Apostle tells us expresly, that its Gods ordinance, that *they which preach the gospel should live of the Gospel*: see and consider these scriptures: 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. 1 *Thess.* 2. 9. 1 *Cor.* 9. 14. 2 *Cor.* 8. 13. 14.

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Reader, By reaſon of the Authors diſtance from the Preſſe, you are deſired to mend with your Pen the enſuing miſtakes, without which the ſence is marred in ſome places.

Page 1. line 9. dele *bee*, l. 18 read *as alſo*, p. 2. l. 9. r. *ſo alſo to deſire*, l. 26 in the marg. r. *minded to do any thing*, p. 3. l. 4. r. *for the further carrying on*, l. 16. r. *fallen in*, p. 4. l. 1. r. *appeared*, l. 11. r. *Churches*, l. 16 r. *in the government*, p. 5. l. 25 r. *tranſlating the Power to him*, p. 6. l. 1 r. *as Ma. Gen. Harriſon*, l. 3. dele *and many* and r. *who*, l. 29. r. *reducing* for *ſeducing*, l. 33. r. *he is acted*, l. 38. dele *ome and* r. *in the*, p. 22. l. 39. r. *of his government*, p. 7. l. 14. r. *it would never be well*, l. 18. r. to l. 12. *as follows*, l. 38. r. *ſhould be approved of*, l. 41. r. *Counties*, p. 8 l. 26. r. *diſcountenance*, p. 11. l. 19. r. *holy ſpirit*, l. 23. r. *as company* p. 12. l. 14. r. *contrived*, l. 29. r. *thoſe ſucceſſes*, l. 33. r. *thereinto*, p. 13. l. 37 r. *but what will be*, p. 14. l. 12. r. *Counties*, p. 15. l. 3. r. *which territories*, l. 5. r. *conditions*, l. 14. r. *they are*, l. 27. r. *invent to themſelves*, l. 34 r. *ſtrange children*, l. 45 r. *Mat.* 24. p. 16. l. 19. for 13. r. 1. *and* 3. l. 24. r. *power faithfulneſſe*.